

Binghamton Letter

nam june paik, 1972 Jan, 8

Dear friends at Radical Software :

Westerners pretend to be younger than their age...we Asians often pretend to look older...My mother used to say, "I cannot wear such thing.. it would look too young". People compliment to Bucky Fuller ..he is only 70 years young... Koreans express "I have eaten 40 years , or so " .. John Cage, who has out-asianized himself more than any Asians... certainly more than power-conscious Indian politicians, prestige-conscious Chinese cadres, G N P conscious Japanese businessman and super-chauvinistic Koreans...(is it not about the time for Hippies to quit their Pseudo-Hindu cult ?)... has managed to pretend ^{to be} older than his age.

Commercial Break, No. 1

Nam June Paik is making a tribute to John Cage (a non-documentary) for WGBH (with David Atwood) for John Cage's 60th birthday.

Now video makes our Time consciousness radically different. Between the 20's and the 30's there is a gulf, a huge demarcation line more striking than the turn of century line. It is more like A.D. and B.C. in the christian calendar. the 1930's is alive everyday in our home screen as late late shows, and it will be so for centuries to come,,,,, where as 1920's is gone and gone ...with wind but without video.

While watching many mediocre paintings of the 17th century at Reijs Museum at Amsterdam, I suddenly realized that minor master's still-life and landscape were not an artwork but merely a visual environment of that day...and so is our daytime shows and latenight talk shows.... We don't watch them... they are just there

..... TV to live with...

(Commercial Break No. 2)

Some cable or public TV should air "TV to sleep with"....

What comes after waterbed ??? Video-bed.

Ralph Hocking and I are making a video-bed to sleep on.

The word "history" came into being, because our events were told and written down thereafter. Now history is being recorded in image or video. Therefore from now on there is no more "History", but only "Imagery" or "Videory".

Eg : University should change their course name from "Contemporary American History" to "Contemporary American Videory".

White snow at Binghamton made me nostalgic about cold cold night snow at Rose Art Museum (1970), when Phyllis Gershuny, very tall and pregnant, first ~~told me~~ ^{told me} talked about "videonewsletter", which she started with you...few people took it seriously.. many even didnot bother to answer your questionnaires... but, Lo. behold... it is now a world-famous-Radical-Software... Last June Phyllis Gershuny , with her baby, crawling and crying, came up to Cal Arts (L.A.) to give a lecture with full of authority. Students admired her as a revolutionary, who MADE it. it was a unforgettably beautiful scene... sorry, we could pay her only 30 \$ from Disney Emperium.. I felt like a pig... a small one.

It is about time that somebody writes a decent review on "Vision and Television" (organized by Russel Connor at Rose Art)... the most important fact.. it is the first art show, which attracted many dogs. Everyday quite a few dogs were waiting at the door to get into the museum... and it was not a meat-Happening à la 1960's Happening era,...but a cold, cool video show in 1970 January.... The reason was clear later... About 100 TV sets were humming and zumming their 15.000 cycles horizontal Oscillation frequencies... and it is, though hardly audible to human ears,

(3)

the most attractive frequency range for dog's ear. Therefore 100 TV sets at Rose art Museum must have sounded like Beatles at Shea Stadium and Mphhamed Ali at Madison Square Garden combined...to all unsophisticated country-dogs of Waltham, Mass.

There must be a channel for dog on Cable... to soothe down the irritated dog's nerve living in a small Manhattan apartment... I will compose many "ultrasonic lullabies" for dogs. and we will see many commercials for video cassettes for dogs, as we see of cat-food commercials.

When communication satellite enables global TV in full swing, will CBS carry cat-food commercials to hungry Bengali people ?

Commercial Break No. 3

John Cage comes up on the screen. *and says*

" This is the newest Pill from FLUXUS Chemical Company...
you swallow it.

it tastes nothing...smells npthings...

and does nathing".

Joh n refused to do it on his program.

We are hearing so much about "Broadcast standard" in video.

But the more ^{is} important the content, the technical standard tends to be less perfect ... Eg, CBS report on the dissenters in Soviet,.. and many satellite relays, which tends to loose color sync often...

and finally MOON LANDING.

Moon landing's picture was way way below the F C C broadcast standard.

Why did F C C not forbide the broadcasting of Moon landing? it was a double standard. Moon landing killed so-said F C C standard in

video-technology. ^{is} fe good..... this fact is as important as

(4)

a very competent chief engineer at Cal Arts video studio.

Commercial Break No.4.

skip

Difference of the 50's liberal and the 60's radical is that the former was serious and pessimistic , the latter was optimistic and loved fun. Who changed the society more ??? I think, the latter. John Cage's refusal to accept "Serious" continental aesthetics and the rise of Happening, popart, Fluxusmovement signaled the beginning of the Sixties. .. What will signal the Seventies ???

needless to say.... "video".

Video-Video-Vidiot-Videology.

Currently there is a danger that video becomes like "poetry", ..one guy writes, and only his immediate firends appreciate.I dont know, how many un-edited dull tapes I had to sit through politely.... We should be more conscious of the situation that we ~~in~~ are in the era of information overload and it means information-retrieval is more tricky than information recording..... Therefore one of Binghamton experiment . ✓ Ralph Hocking, Ken Dominick, Bob Diamond, Shierry Miller is how to compete with Walter Conkite with half inch tape ??? Here I think, my endeavour with video synthesizer becomes also important in seemingly pure information exchange.

Geisha s is the oldest Time-sharing device of male chauvinism.

Marriage is an instant Sex-access system.

Telephone is point to point communication system.

Radio-TV is a point to space communication system...like fish egg.

Ultimate goal of video revolution is the establishment of
space to space, or plain to plain communication
without confusion and inteference each other.

How to achieve this goal ? it will need decades of experiments.

Douglas Davis' Hokkaidim event at Corcoran Gallery (last June) was so
far the most ambitious endeavour to touch this home base at one shot.
Nobody expected a hole-in-one, but it showed vividly that our direction
was right, workable... and ~~many more~~ many more experiments
should be done toward this very end.

What is art ?

is it the moon ?

or

the finger-tip, which points to this moon ?

Avantgarde art is the finger-tip and Hokkaidim was a sharp
finger-tip.

I am a Korean... I tend to pretend to look old... I am almost 39 and half
years old , still I am sloppy like hell...I hate perfectionist. Yukio
Mishima was a "perfectionist"... his death was a "perfect" mistake.

(Commercial Break No. 5)

I am selling my loft at Canal Street.

2000 \$ fixture. 145 \$ rent.

(6)

class
Paul Valery wrote in the thirties that a ~~upper~~ middle [✓] French young man can
material enjoy more pleasure than Louis the fourteenth.

On the ~~xxx~~ same logic, our brother in disadvantaged neighbourhood
can enjoy more visual pleasure than a middle class young man
in the thirties... Nowadays anybody can see 20 movies a week, which
nobody ~~did~~ in the thirties... The poorer people are, the richer
is their visual life....

Is is progress ?

Am I a pig ?

Dear Radical Software :

It is only two and half year, since we all met at
Howard Wise Gallery...and in video calendar, it looks like a last century.
it means that we covered a huge terrain... Not any other artistic
discipline did ~~not~~ so ^{well} as we did.... it is a time for
congratulation... For myself, I re-lived the excitement of
early Sixties, when we made various Fluxus events and publication.
I am deeply grateful for that... and I am lucky to have had ^{the} ~~my~~ youth twice.
and it is just a ^{beginning} ~~beginning~~... when we get "wall to wall TV," video cassettes,
cable TV, 3-D color TV all lined up.... where will we be ?

Let's us live long.....

as Marcel Duchamp did.

Paul J. R.